We would respectfully direct the attention of our Country Subscribers to the mode we have adopted of signifying to them, when the period of their subscriptions expire, and when they become due—the substitution of a BLUE *envelope to their paper instead of one of the ordinary nature.*

THE BUILDER,

NO. XIV.

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1843.

NEW PRISON, LEEDS.

IMMEDIATELY upon the information falling in our way, that a new prison was about to be erected for the borough of Leeds, and that the architects of the whole country were solicited by public advertisement to give to that borough and their country the benefit of their common contributions on the subject of prison arrangements, involving, as this must necessarily do, a large amount of personal labour and the study of many minds, and a considerable expense—immediately, we resolved to contribute our part to the common stock, for the benefit of the competing architects, by furnishing information on the subject, which we thought our position entitled us to ask for, and enabled us to give. We lost no time in at once applying to the Home Office for permission to examine the New Model Prison, intending to make it the groundwork of our ratiocinations, as we knew it to be the exemplar required to be conformed to, in its main particulars, by the government. We were surprised that a week's elapse should have produced us no reply, upon which we wrote again, and the cool official answer was, that "Secretary Sir James Graham hath no information to communicate relative to the New Model Prison." No apology was made for the delay, nor, indeed, had the answer a direct bearing upon our application; we asked not for information, but in the most respectful manner sought that permission to go over the New Model Prison, which we considered the government would gladly accord, stating our object to be the promotion of clear and sound views of prison economy, for the benefit of this competition, and through it by consequence for the country.

Now, we think we are not presuming too much for ourselves, and indeed we throw all personal considerations out of the question, in regarding the conduct of the Home Office, as any thing but correct; putting courtesy aside entirely, we are disposed to make a stand at this point, not in any pompous or impertinent spirit of stickling, not in any disrespect of authority; far from it (the authority has less of respect for self than he entertains for it); but we consider a principle violated, or rather a principle enunciated in such conduct, against which, on the part of the profession, it is our duty to take a strong exception. The Home Office has its special duty in presiding over the management of this question: it has taken the lead in determining many points referring to the architectural arrangement of prisons. It employed Major Jebb originally in the contrivance and construction of the prison at Pentonville, which it sets forth as a model for the guidance and imitation of future operators; and unless it intends that Major Jebb, or a staff under his command, shall direct the new erections called for in all parts of the country, by the new views of prison discipline enforced by the government, or assumes that Major Jebb has concentered within himself and this prison the perfection and fulness of contrivance—it is a duty, we say, that it owes to the profession of architecture, to give it every facility for understanding the views of government, and for enlarging upon them; and we know of no way so simple as the one we ventured to offer in putting our humble service voluntarily and zealously, as we proposed, in requisition.

God forbid that we should be understood as saying one word of a disrespectful nature in reference to the office over which Sir James Graham presides, or of the government of which he is a member, or of himself; the appointment which he holds, to say nothing of his personal character and great talent, demands from us that which is understood in the enlarged and literal sense of the word loyalty—but is there nothing demanded for the profession of which we are the humble, and it may be said the unworthy representative? is there no loyalty, no respect due to it? has it no functions, no dignities that invest its members with more than their own mere personality? It has, and it shall have; it is for this that we stand forward—it is for this that we write—it is for this that we exist.

Yes, Architecture must take a different place in the popular estimation before it can be fully accredited, and before this country can hope to regain the lustre which the former doings of its architects obtained for it. A sad disparagement of opinion, as discreditable to the profession that endures as to the public that entertains it, prevails on the subject of art and artists; artists are regarded as inferior to traders, commercial men, jobbers—it takes no stand of equality with the other professions; the law and the army and navy appear to be recognized as the qualifying ordeals of men entitled to legislate and to govern; but artists, among whom architects are reckoned, are thought to be of that class of poor devils—like garret poets and authors—who should to all time personify that nondescript thing in humanity that exists by a conceded privilege, and fights a constant battle with a poverty which the common consent assigns for its sovereign and tormentor.

Matters can never be as they should be with this disturbance of the social and political balance. Art and literature have as strong a claim to the coronet and its immunities and privileges, as territorial wealth, ancestral dignity, forensic ability, the valour of the sword, or commercial renown; politics are not a trade requiring a special apprenticeship, they have been so regarded and so degraded. We have our thoughts now fixed upon one who lived in times when far different views animated the commonalty, and far different results flowed from their prevalence. An architect, the illustrious William of Wykeham, was his sovereign's and the people's trust; it was not incompatible with his devoted pursuit of art to be a councillor of state. Nor was a later scion of the same stock, the equally illustrious Wren, deemed to be unfitted for the high trust of his countrymen because he was an artist—No! And Architecture must again assert her true dignity; she must claim for herself a large and a leading share in the philosophy of life, and in proportion to the greatness of the country in which her place is established must be the renown and the respect which attends and encircles her.

It no doubt required of Major Jebb to bring the resources of a comprehensive mind to the question of designing the New Model Prison; it was not a mere matter of brick and mortar, but one of vast political and moral involvements; and how can it be expected that other architects and designers are to tread in the steps in which it was thought necessary for Major Jebb to walk, without having their minds thoroughly awakened, as his was, to all the pertinencies that link with the question of criminal punishment and the correction of the criminal? We lament that this opportunity has been thrown away, for so we regard it now, the time being so short; but we shall not fail to recur to it on a fitting opportunity; in the meantime, we may recommend to those who are entering upon this competition, to procure a copy of the *Illustrated London News* of January 7th, where they will find a detail of plans, obtained or permitted under some auspices which we think we have, without the least disparagement of that excellent paper, a much stronger claim to. There is an excellent series of papers, too, on the question of criminal jurisprudence by Mr. Sampson, published by Highley, of Fleet-street, which it would be well to read, and the reports of the Parliamentary committees; with this recommendation we must close the subject for the present.

SURVEY OF LONDON.

AT length a becoming spirit is about being manifested on this subject, but still we must complain of, or rather blame, the apathy of the Profession. They deserve all the disrespect and obloquy that is heaped upon them, and the low estimate of public opinion, of which we have treated in the foregoing remarks, if they do not vindicate themselves by a manly, and, we will say, a truly artistic feeling. We have authority for stating that the members of the Royal College of Engineers are imbued by the spirit of gentlemen in this matter, and are not at all anxious to be employed on the irregular service of surveying the city of London, while its own surveyors sit idly by and mope or grumble at the indignity. A meeting will shortly be called, several names of gentlemen willing to take an active part in proper measures of representation to government, have been sent in to us, and we shall be happy to receive any additional ones which the sense of duty, or a feeling of approbation of our views, may induce any gentleman to forward us.

BUILDERS' INSTITUTE OR SCHOOL.

WE have received a dozen names of students all anxious and eager to avail themselves of the offer we made to establish a school for instruction in building draughtsmanship, modelling, &c., and we have also had applications from gentlemen competent to take a part in the management of the establishment. Our view is, and it is the view of all with whom we have conversed, that hundreds of building artificers will avail themselves of the advantages which such an Institute, properly conducted, will open to them. And we must confess to a little reluctance, it may be called a coyness on our part to assume the lead in so important a business. We have, however, done the best to wash our hands of any charge of presumption, by putting in train an overture to the Council of Education—that they would take upon themselves the responsibility, and by assigning apartments in Somerset House in connection with the School of Design, and by appointing masters, with all the ample provision that a national grant of 5,000*l.* awards them—with models, and the means of procuring models in profusion—give to the practical genius of our countrymen the benefit of all that good which is so eminently within their power to confer.

But whether or not our suggestion be

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